

Celebrating God's Judgment

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[0 : 00] This morning, as we just read, we're going to be in Revelation 15. So would you turn there in your Bibles? Revelation 15, 1 through 8, it's a short chapter, only eight verses, but it's an important one, a pivotal one in this part of the book.

Today is April 7th, and if I have this right, we're only a couple of weeks away from the KUSD spring break. And then, only, I think, six weeks after that, it will be time for summer vacation.

Even if it's been a long time since you've been a student in school, I'm sure you remember the glory, the joy of those breaks, and what it's like on that last day of school when you know that you have all this freedom stretched out in front of you.

That joy of spring break or summer vacation when you sleep in and eat snacks or whatever you do, I don't know. I'm a teacher, so I live by this academic calendar, and I know this rhythm of the hardship of the semester and the joy of these breaks that come up.

I teach at Trinity, and one of my friends and colleagues there who teaches theology, his name is David Louis. Louis, and he has a theory that I call the Louis Doctrine.

[1 : 20] The Louis Doctrine says that the joy we experience when we are released for spring break or summer vacation, the joy that we experience is directly proportionate to the pain that we experience during the semester.

So in other words, the worse my semester, the longer the projects take, the sleepless nights, the hardship of the work, the worse it is, the sweeter that break will be when I'm finally released from it. We're staying up late, we're tired, and our eyes are bloodshot, and we're thinking to ourselves, how long, how long are we going to have to keep this up before we have that sweet break that lies ahead?

We just can't wait to celebrate that. Well, school is hard, but it is nothing compared to the difficulty that we experience in life. From the moment we're born, we are wicked toward other people, and we are victims of their wickedness.

And often the greatest hurts that we experience in life are the ways that we mistreat each other. Children are neglected and abused and mistreated by the same adults that are supposed to care for them and protect them.

[2 : 40] Teenagers go to school and are bullied and tormented by the cool kids. And then when we grow into adulthood, that's when the trouble really begins. We disrespect and hate each other.

We treat each other with racism. We mock each other. Those of us who have influence and connections and money take advantage of people who are in vulnerable situations and make it worse.

Poor women are trafficked and abused. People steal what they don't have and murder people that get in their way.

They lie and they cheat each other, and our government officials are corrupt and make backroom deals. People kill their unborn babies to try and cover up bad decisions.

Nations go to war against each other to try and claim influence or land, and they leave battlefields strewn with dead bodies and leave orphans and widows behind at home.

[3 : 52] Governments oppress their people and enslave and imprison them. And all of this suffering, it only takes a couple of days of reading the news to just get depressed, because all of this suffering that takes place in the world comes from the sin that we carry in our hearts like a disease.

It just keeps manifesting itself in this wickedness that we do against each other. And even though all of us have unfortunately some kind of experience with these things, the hardships of daily life, those are common to all of humanity, there is a particular animosity that the people of the world

have historically brought forth against the church.

Followers of Jesus Christ have always been the target of outrage and rejection from the time that they were thrown to the lions in the Roman period, thrown in prison, churches burned.

Even in our contemporary world, I mean, even in our country, lawyers are now taking Christians to church for what they believe, and I'm sorry, taking them to court for what they believe, and trying to put them out of business.

In North Africa, militia groups burn villages and kidnap women and take them off who knows where. In North Korea, the government throws Christians into these terrible concentration camps where they just languish for years.

[5 : 21] And not long ago in the Middle East, radicals took Christians down to the beach and in front of video cameras, they cut off their heads. So we live in a world that is in rebellion against God, and often it just seems like the wicked are just getting away with it, doesn't it?

Sometimes it just seems like there is just no recourse for the evil that people mete out against each other. The psalmist knew about this. Billy already read part of Psalm 73.

Let's look at a few verses at the beginning. You can just listen. Psalm 73. Listen to what the psalmist says here. He says, In other words, What is the point of trying to faithfully follow God when these arrogant, wicked people just prosper and flourish in their lives and they seem to just get away with it year after year?

What is the point of that? For all the day long, I have been stricken and rebuked every morning. And when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task.

It is hard to live among the wicked. How are we supposed to think about that? How are we supposed to live our lives in this world when people are so evil against each other? We may wonder, When is God finally going to do something about this?

[7 : 15] In Revelation 6, 9 and 10, it says, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.

They have already been killed because they were following Jesus. And they cried out with a loud voice, O sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?

Well, our passage this morning in Revelation 15 is an answer to that. It's a celebration of God's victory over the wicked. Revelation 15, 1 through 8 introduces chapter 16, which we'll actually focus on next week, in which God pours out his ultimate anger and judgment on the earth.

In our passage, Revelation 15, is a prospective celebration of that judgment. It's a victory song that God will judge and destroy evil once and for all.

If a difficult semester brings all kinds of joy and happiness when the summer finally arrives, then can you imagine the celebration when God finally puts down all evil?

[8 : 31] Can you imagine the joy and the praise when God brings justice and destroys all wickedness and sets the world right? That's the topic of our passage this morning. Now, if you look at Revelation 15, you'll see that it is structured with three occurrences of the phrase, I looked or I saw.

Look at 15, 1. He says, and I saw. And then if you look at 15, 2, he says, and I saw. And then in 15, 5, he says, after this, I looked.

See that? So these phrases divide the passage into three parts. The beginning in verse 1 and the end in verses 5 through 8 are an introduction to the bowl judgments which are coming in chapter 16.

So the beginning and the end of our passage is looking forward and the middle of our passage in verses 2 through 4 are the celebration of what is coming. The celebration of the judgment.

So this is how we're going to proceed. We're going to go a little bit out of order here. First, we're going to look at what God's people are celebrating in verse 1 and 5 through 8. And then we're going to look at why God's people are celebrating in the middle in verses 2 through 4.

[9 : 43] First, let's look at what God's people are celebrating. In verse 1, John sees a sign in heaven. There are seven angels with seven plagues. Previously, we read about seven angels with the seven churches in chapter 1 and the seven angels with seven trumpets in chapter 8.

But these are different because these are the last, it says. John has seen the seal judgments in chapters 6 through 8 and he's seen the trumpet judgments in chapters 8 through 11 and now this is the end.

With these seven, it says, the wrath of God is finished. It is completed. These aren't just the last judgments in the sequence and they're not just the last judgments in the book.

These are the last judgments ever. This is the end. The word finished here means completed. It means God is going to have finished the job.

It means his wrath, his righteous anger will be completely expressed. Now, if we skip to verse 5, John says that he looked and heaven was opened.

[10:54] This is what happens in the book of Revelation before each new phase. Before the seal judgments, heaven was opened. Before the trumpet judgments, it opened. Before the woman and the dragon.

And now heaven is opened again and John can see in this vision into heaven and he sees a vision of the tent of witness there, the tabernacle. In the Old Testament, when God saved his people from slavery in Egypt, he established this tent, this tent of witness or tent of meeting, a tabernacle that represented his dwelling on the earth with his people.

He made a covenant with them and he said, if you obey me, then I will bless you and I will live with you and we will be in relationship together. But if you disobey me and you break this covenant, there are going to be terrible consequences.

So this tent of witness is a symbol that the nations have broken the covenant of God and now those consequences have arrived.

And the point of this, the point of John looking into heaven and seeing the tent is that these judgments that are being introduced are from God. It's not just that the earth is getting old and tired.

[12:10] It's not just that they're having a bad year or that the sun is just about to burn out or something like that. The terrible things that John is about to describe are coming from heaven.

And actually, John is more specific than that because if you look at verse 6, he says that the terrible plagues aren't just coming from heaven, they're coming from Jesus. How do we know that?

It's because the seven angels are clothed in pure bright linen with golden sashes around their chests. In chapter 1, verse 13, that is exactly what Jesus is wearing.

So in other words, these angels represent Christ. They're in the same uniform as Christ and they are carrying out his work. And then in verse 7, it says, four living creatures give seven golden bowls to the seven angels.

Now that idea of four living creatures reminds us of some things in the earlier part of the book, in chapter 4, when four living creatures are standing around the throne of God and they're saying, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come.

[13:22] And in the book of Ezekiel, in the Old Testament, the four living creatures move with God's throne. They move with God's glory and they represent him.

In Isaiah chapter 6, there are these heavenly creatures standing around God's throne and they're saying, holy, holy, holy. So what we have here is a tying together of these images, of these four living creatures who are in the inner sanctuary by God's throne.

They stand around the throne praising him and calling him holy, holy, holy. And the point is that these plagues are coming from God.

So John sees the tabernacle and he sees the angels dressed in the same apparel as Jesus Christ and he sees the four living creatures which are in the inner sanctuary of God's throne room.

And then, in verse 8, he concludes, And the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

[14:31] Again, this is imagery that's coming from the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, when the people finally finished building the tabernacle, setting up that tent, then God's glory moved into it and it was filled with smoke.

And then later, when Solomon finally finished building the temple, God's glory moved into it and it filled with smoke. In Isaiah chapter 6, when the train of God's robe came down, it filled the temple. And in Ezekiel, when Ezekiel was describing God's glory in the temple, he says there was a cloud that filled the temple. So in other words, God is there. He's there.

And until his seven plagues are finished, no one can even go in. The plagues are coming from God. He's not sitting by thinking, oh boy, I hope I could do something about that.

I wish I could stop that in some way. They're coming from him. They're not coming from the creatures. They're not coming from the seven angels. They're just his messengers. The plagues are

coming from God and no one can stop him.

[15:37] No one can hold back his hand. This is God's wrath. It's his incredible power and even his own angelic servants who stand around his throne in normal times can't be in his presence because his wrath is too great.

And all of this is just the introduction. Because as we get into chapter 16 in the next chapter, then the seven angels begin to pour out their golden bowls of God's wrath.

When the first angel pours out bowl number one, then painful sores break out and boils break out on those people who worship the beast.

Then the second angel comes and pours out bowl number two and all the sea turns to blood and it kills all the creatures in the sea. God is destroying his own creation.

Then the third angel pours out bowl number three and all the rivers and the springs, all the places where you might hope to find drinking water turn to blood.

[16:44] And the angel of God who is in charge stands there and says, these people on the earth have shed the blood of the saints and prophets. Now you, God, have given them blood to drink.

Yikes. And then the fourth angel pours out bowl number four and the sun heats up and burns people with fire and scorches them with its heat.

But the people don't repent. They curse God. Then the fifth angel pours out bowl number five and the earth is covered in total darkness and the people have these unbelievable burns from the sun and boils and they're thirsty and the sea stinks like blood and now they're in total darkness and it says, they gnaw at their tongues in anguish and they curse God for their pain.

Then the sixth angel pours out bowl number six and the Euphrates River dries up so that all the nations of the whole earth can gather together to attack God's people.

But what they don't know is that they've just made themselves a really good target and God wipes them out. They have only gathered for their own destruction. And finally, the seventh angel pours out bowl number seven and there's a great earthquake.

[18:07] It says, greater than any earthquake in history and the cities of the world are split apart and gigantic hailstones fall from heaven and the people underneath are cursing God because the plague is so severe.

So God is pouring out his wrath on the earth and he inflicts people with painful boils and takes away their drinking water and burns them and keeps them in total darkness and then gathers them together and rips apart the earth and hurls giant hailstones down on them.

This is the God who created the world. He has created people in his own image and now he is destroying them. It sounds terrible.

It really does but the wrath of God is not the problem. The wrath of God is the cure. Imagine that someone who, someone visits you who grew up on a deserted island somewhere completely cut off from civilization and for some reason I don't know, I don't know why we take them on a tour of a cancer unit in a hospital.

We show them rooms with needles and claustrophobic MRI machines that no one wants to get into and we show them the surgery area where people are cut open and we show them chemotherapy that makes people nauseous and weak and miserable and they just shake their head and they say this is terrible.

[19:38] This is terrible. Why would you do these things to someone? And we would say I know it's harsh and we're not always successful but the thing that we're attacking is worse because we're killing cancer and cancer is a terrible disease.

See in some ways our extreme attempts at a cure for cancer only make sense if you know how terrible the disease is. Even though the cure seems harsh the disease is worse and we are trying to kill the cancer.

God's judgment looks harsh at first glance if you think that sin is not a very big deal. If you think that sin is just a little lie or a little unkind thought then we might look at the cure and say how can God be so ferocious?

I don't know if I want to serve a God of wrath like that but we may not understand the full weight of the problem because sin is a cancer that infects the heart and God offers to kill it.

God offers to kill it in our hearts by the power of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. He wants to kill it but if we say no then it starts to grow and it metastasizes until there is nothing left to do but kill the entire person.

[21 : 16] Sin is rebellion against God the creator of heaven and earth and these are unrepentant people who persist in evil and violence and systematic injustice and persecution of God's people and God is not going to allow that to continue.

He is going to put a stop to it and notice that even now even now in the midst of judgment look at how these people are responding they're not responding by begging God for mercy they are responding with curses they are cursing God and rebelling against him to the very end.

They would not let him kill the sin in their hearts and so he has no choice but to kill them. this is what God's people are celebrating in verses 1 and 5 through 8.

Now let's go back and look at the middle section of our passage in verses 2 through 4 and think about why they're celebrating. In verse 2 John looks into heaven and it says These are God's people who have given their lives in faithfulness to him.

The reason they're in heaven is because they have already been killed for their faith. We have seen this group before in Revelation in Revelation 11 it says when they finish their testimony the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them.

[22 : 56] So from an earthly perspective it looks like the beast has already won that it has conquered them. But then we learn in chapter 12 in the next chapter that they have conquered the beast that all is not as it seems they have conquered by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony.

They persevered in their faith. even though they were persecuted and killed and when they died they were victorious because the blood of Jesus saved them. Notice in this passage here in verse 2 notice that it tells us two times that they are standing on the sea of glass.

That tells us two important things. First of all we saw back in Revelation 4 that the sea of glass is before God's throne. So it tells us that these saints these martyrs who have died for their faith are in the presence of God.

The second thing it tells us is that everything is peaceful there. In the Old Testament the sea is considered to be frightening and unpredictable and dangerous.

Think about the little boats that the people rode around on. I mean it's a dangerous thing. It's unpredictable. But this sea is not like that. This sea is a sea of glass. It is completely still.

[24 : 16] There is no turbulence or trouble at all. Here we are at the end of all things. He's already brought the seals. He's already brought the trumpets. He's about to pour out the bowls.

It's a time of judgment and God's wrath and smoke is filling the temple on the one hand but on the other hand everything is completely peaceful.

There is no stress. There is no anxiety at all. God has everything under control. There is total safety and total peace.

God never sits in heaven no matter what the circumstances he never sits in heaven chewing on his fingernails or wondering what he's going to do next. Actually that's worth remembering.

Think about that in your own life. When you are going through incredible hardship no matter how stressed you are in heaven there is total peace with God.

[25 : 18] He has complete control of the situation. These martyred saints are holding harps to sing the song in verse 3.

It's called the song of Moses to connect it back again to the Old Testament when the Israelites sang a song of victory after God saved them from the Egyptian army.

Remember after they came out of Egypt Pharaoh and his army were chasing them through the desert and they were cut off because there was a large body of water in front of them. At the last minute God opened the Red Sea and the Israelites hurried across on dry ground and then God waited until the Pharaoh and the Egyptian army were in the middle of the water and then he let the water close and he drowned them all.

He killed them. And by killing the Egyptian army God saved his people. And so the people respond. Moses and the people sing a song to the Lord.

They say I will sing to the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously the horse and rider he has thrown into the sea. And now we have another song.

[26 : 29] It's a song of Moses because it's a victory song but it's also a song of the Lamb because it's a song of God's great deliverance in Christ. In this victory song the saints are celebrating three things about God's coming judgment and they're also giving three reasons why.

So let's look at those briefly. First in this song they say great and amazing are your deeds O Lord God the Almighty. God's acts of judgment are powerful and incredible.

He is God the Almighty. He is a powerful God. You know in history many times God has not intervened. Maybe there have been times when we've wondered why why doesn't God do something about that evil.

Why doesn't He stop those people from doing that? Why if He is if He's in heaven watching why does He let that go on for so long?

Maybe we wonder is it because God really can't do anything? No. That's not true. He has incredible power. He has been waiting and now He will bring His powerful anger on the earth like no one has ever seen.

[27 : 55] No one will question His ability. He is the King the Almighty the Lord of armies. Second not only is God powerful but at the end of verse 3 they say He is just and true.

Just and true are your ways O King of the nations. In other words God is not only powerful He is also good. His great and amazing deeds at the beginning of verse 3 are not just demonstrations of power to impress us they are expressions of His character.

God doesn't desire that anyone should perish. He resists judgment. He waits. He waits for people to respond to Him in faith and repentance sometimes until the very end but when He does judge it is just and right.

When He pours out His wrath on the earth and burns His enemies and takes away their drinking water and brings total darkness and hurls hailstones on them He is being just and it's because He is righteous.

Maybe you've wondered why doesn't God do something about that injustice that I'm reading about on the news? When that person was hurting me why didn't God intervene and stop them?

[29 : 36] Why is He letting this go on for so long? Maybe we wonder He might be powerful but maybe He isn't good. Maybe He sees evil and He just doesn't think it's a very big deal.

That's not true. He sees and He cares and He has been waiting but now He will act. He will do what is right and true by pouring out His judgment on the earth and setting everything right.

The third response to God's judgment comes at the beginning of verse 4. The saints say, who will not fear O Lord and glorify your name? This is a rhetorical question with an obvious emphatic answer.

Everyone will fear and glorify God when they see His angels pour out the bowls of wrath. People have not always taken Jesus very seriously. The Roman soldiers spat on Him.

The Jewish leaders mocked Him. People use His name as a swear word. He sometimes flips through the channel and you see Jesus there as a ridiculous cartoon on some television show.

[30 : 50] But when He pours out His wrath on the earth, everyone, everyone will know who He is. Everyone will give Him the honor that He is due because He will show Himself to be the mighty God with unlimited power and unlimited good.

God will give us a victory song, a celebration, and they say, God is powerful, God is good and just and true, and everyone will give Him the glory that He deserves.

And then they give us three further reasons, three more reasons to celebrate. If you look at the end of verse 4, there are three occurrences of the word for here, kind of the word because, and I think probably only two of them are translated in most of the English versions.

It says, for you alone are holy, for all the nations will worship you, and for your righteous acts have been revealed. Three reasons. For you alone are holy.

God is set apart from the world and He stands above it, outside of it, He cannot look on evil. And so now He is destroying it. For all nations will come and worship you.

[32 : 15] Remember in verse 3, they said, He is the King of the nations. This picks up on an important theme in the Old Testament prophets, that those among the nations who submit to God will stream to Jerusalem at the end, come to the New Jerusalem to worship Him.

It says, all nations, because everyone is invited, all people from every land, from every language, God has always intended for His salvation to go to the ends of the earth.

When you know, when you see this, when you know that God is powerful and good, and He is bringing justice on the earth, then you have the opportunity to submit to Him and to come and join Him, and that is what He wants.

And then finally, they say, for your righteous acts have been revealed. Some people might say, I don't know if I want to worship a God who judges like this, but these martyred saints in heaven are saying, we worship God because He judges like this.

He is righteous, and He does what is good. It is a good thing for God to judge evil. It is right. It is because He is good and loving that He will not let evil prevail forever.

[33 : 37] So I think one way to sum up this passage is to say that God's ultimate judgment is something to celebrate. God's ultimate judgment is something to celebrate.

Let's talk briefly about three points of application for this. Number one, celebrating God's judgment increases our loyalty to Him.

It increases our loyalty to Him. Is it wrong to celebrate the suffering and destruction of the world? Aren't we supposed to love the people of the world just like God does?

Yes. Yes. But there's a tension. If you're feeling that tension, it's because that tension exists in the Bible. On the one hand, we know that God loves the world and sent His Son to save it as a ransom. It says in John 3.16, for God so loved the world. And He wants His people to live in this world as good citizens. He says in Jeremiah 29.7, seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile.

[34 : 47] You're living there temporarily. Seek its welfare. That applies to us as well. Paul says in 1 Timothy 2, pray for your civil authorities.

Live peaceful and quiet lives. But on the other hand, the world is opposed to God and to His people. In John 15.19, Jesus says, if you were of the world, the world would love you as its own.

But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. And in 1 John 2.15, He says, do not love the world or the things in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. If we love our sin, if we love our sinful world, God, if we assimilate and we consider this to be our home, if we adopt the mindset that this is the good life and we're unclear about who it is that we really belong to, and we lose our sense of true citizenship, then we will find it difficult to celebrate the destruction of the world.

But when we are properly aligned with God, and we love the same things that he loves, and we hate the same things that he hates, then we will love people.

[36 : 28] We will love the worst of sinners, because we also were the worst of sinners. We will love them, but we will also love God's glory and his victory. We love it when God destroys evil and stops evildoers from what they do.

Listen to this quote from Martin Luther, the reformer. He says, we should pray, we should pray that our enemies be converted and become our friends.

We should pray for them, and if not, that their doing and designing be bound to fail and have no success, and that their persons perish rather than the gospel and the kingdom of Christ.

God's judgment creates a little bit of a hard edge, doesn't it? It's a little bit of a hard edge there that forces us to choose our side.

And when we celebrate, that helps us to choose a side and to grow in our loyalty to God. Second, celebrating God's judgment in the future helps us to persevere now when things get hard.

[37 : 43] God's love. The book of Revelation is written to a church that's under attack. For a long time, in this country, we have had a lot of peace and a lot of freedom, and so we have to use our imaginations a little bit, although things are heating up a bit now.

But like the saints in Revelation 6, we also ask, how long until you judge? How long will God let the church be persecuted? And right now he's waiting, and we have to wait too.

But someday he will pour out his wrath on the earth and bring terrible judgment, and when God's enemies are destroyed, God's people will finally be safe. The people in our passage who are celebrating God's judgment have already persevered.

They have already clung to their faith and clung to their relationship with Jesus Christ, even though it has cost them their lives. They have already died for him, but it was worth it. Their suffering was worth it because now they stand in God's presence and cheer him on as he puts down evil and destroys his enemies, and we also must persevere.

We must hold on to our faith no matter what. We also have to be willing to suffer and die for Jesus. And you know what? This celebration in Revelation 15 helps.

[39 : 04] It helps. Because it's like we know that there's a party that has already started, and we will be there soon. We know how this story turns out.

Any discomfort or suffering that we experience for Jesus now is going to be worth it because we know that someday there will be a great celebration as God puts everything right.

Number three, it is not too late to join the celebration. God's people say in verse four, for all nations will come and worship you. It's interesting that even here in the midst of judgment, even here when the people being judged are cursing God, not everyone is being judged and not everyone is cursing him.

Some from the nations are coming to Jerusalem to worship him as he deserves. And so there is an implicit call here in the passage to respond to this future knowledge with repentance and faith.

God kills evildoers, and when he does that, it is right and good, but he doesn't want to do that. He wants to take you into surgery. He wants to kill the sin that lies in your heart.

[40 : 20] He wants to kill it by the power of Jesus. He knows that if he doesn't, it will grow and metastasize and you will be lost. It has to be killed, but the only cure is the power of Jesus' death and resurrection.

You might think to yourself, it sounds like you're urging me to accept Jesus so that I escape his anger. Yeah, that's right. You might say, I don't know if being afraid of God's judgment is a good reason to follow Jesus.

That just sounds inappropriate for some reason. No, it's not. It's a perfectly good reason. That's what this passage is saying. God is going to pour out his wrath and he is going to inflict terrible suffering and death and he will be right to do so when he does.

But he's offering now for you to defect, to join him and to submit to him and to allow him to perform that surgery and then to live with him as his child in peace and joy forever and ever.

It is a gracious offer. It is an offer of love. But there will come a time when it is too late for that. And so this morning if you feel uneasy about where you stand with God, I urge you come and talk to me, to Mike, to one of the other pastors or elders, to the person sitting next to you.

[41 : 54] We would love to help you know for sure that you can have peace with God. So God's judgment is something to celebrate.

It encourages us to reinforce our loyalty with God. It helps us to persevere while we wait, and it urges us to join him while we still can.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, as we work through this passage, it raises mixed emotions in us. Because we know that we are the rightful targets of your wrath, and we grieve our own sin that causes us to be enemies with you.

So we grieve that sin that you hate. And we also love our family, and our friends, and our neighbors. On the one hand, we celebrate your right judgment.

[42 : 57] On the other hand, we love them. And we want you to be victorious. And so all we can say as we work through these conflicted things is that we are dependent on your mercy.

We have nothing to boast about. We have nothing to offer to you. There's no reason for us to be a part of your people other than your grace that you've shown to us in Jesus.

We love you only because you loved us first. So Lord, we thank you for your grace. We thank you for the encouragement of this passage. We thank you that you are a great and powerful God, that your deeds are amazing, that your ways are just and true.

We worship you this morning, for your righteous acts have been revealed to us. We pray these things in your name. Amen. Amen.